Supreme Court benches

932. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to set up Supreme Court benches at three different places in the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) to (c) The Government has not received any proposal from the Chief Justice of India for establishment of a bench of the Supreme Court in any part of the country. The Government can consider the matter after such a proposal/recommendation is received from the Chief Justice of India as per the provisions of Article 130 of the Constitution.

Reimbursement to Gujarat for Fast Track Courts

933. SHRI VIJAY KUMAR RUPANI: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the scheme of Fast Track Courts was started as 100 per cent centrally sponsored scheme;

(b) whether it is also a fact that though the scheme has been extended uptill 2010, the amount of central assistance has been reduced substantially; and

(c) whether the Gujarat Government has borne the extra burden of more than Rs. 856.80 lakh per annum and Rs. 4284.00 lakh for the period of extension of the scheme upto 2010 and if so, whether Government is considering to reimburse the amount to the State?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) The scheme of Fast Track Courts (FTCs) was started in the year 2000 for a period of five years on the recommendations of the Eleventh Finance Commission. The central assistance to the States was provided at the rate of Rs.5.00 lakh per court for non recurring expenditure which included Rs.3.4 lakh for construction and Rs.1.6 lakh for computer and library. For recurring expenditure, an amount of Rs.4.8 lakh per court per year was provided.

(b) The term of scheme of the Fast Track Courts recommended by the Eleventh Finance Commission ended on 31st March, 2005. The Supreme Court, which is monitoring the functioning of Fast Track Courts through the case of Brij Mohan Lal *Vs* UOI & Ors observed that the scheme of Fast Track Courts should not be disbanded all of a sudden and in its order dated 31st March, 2005, directed the Union of India to continue the Fast Track Courts. The Government accorded its approval for the continuation of 1562 Fast Track Courts that were operational as on 31.3.2005 for a further period of 5 years *i.e.* up to 31st March, 2010. For the extended period, the norm for assistance to the States provided for an additional amount of Rs.8.6 lakh to be provided to the States in the first two

years towards the cost of constructions for additional space in the court room and Rs.4.8 lakh per court per year towards recurring expenditure.

(c) A grant of Rs. 3570.70 lakh has already been released to the Government of Gujarat during the period of extension of the scheme from the year 2005-06 to 2008-09. The grant has been released as per the norms of the existing scheme and there is no such proposal to reimburse any excess amount that may have been incurred by the State Government.

Vacant posts of High Court judges

†934.DR. PRABHA THAKUR: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of vacant posts of judges in different High Courts in the country as on 31st December, 2007;

(b) the steps being taken by Government to fill up the said vacancies; and

(c) by when the vacant posts are likely to be filled?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI M. VEERAPPA MOILY): (a) A Statement is enclosed (*See* below).

(b) and (c) As per the existing procedure for appointment of the Chief Justice and other Judges of the High Court, the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court is to initiate the proposal for appointment of Judges. The Government has been urging the Chief Justices to take steps for initiating the proposals in time for filling up the vacancies. No time frame has been fixed for filling up the vacant posts.

Statement

Approved strength and vacancies of judges in various High Courts of the country

S. No.	Name of the High Court	Approved strength as on 31.12.2007	Vacancies as on 31.12.2007
1	2	3	4
1	Allahabad	160	89
2	Andhra Pradesh	49	19
3	Bombay	75	24
4	Calcutta	58	17
5	Chhattisgarh	18	12
6	Delhi	48	16
7	Gauhati	26	03
8	Gujarat	42	11
9	Himachal Pradesh	11	02

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi